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Viva la Tortuga!

NEWSLETTER OF TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK

SEATURTLES.ORG

Protecting Green Sea Turtles in the Face of Climate Change



GREEN SEA TURTLES once numbered in the millions, but now less than 1 percent remain on our blue-green planet. These beautiful ocean giants that can weigh up to 700 pounds and can measure up to five feet in length are one of the largest sea turtles in the world, but they are also among the most vulnerable.

Beautiful green sea turtles, like all sea turtles, are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to their nesting behavior. For instance, a staggering 96 percent of all Hawai'i green sea turtles nest on one low lying sandbar that could be swamped by sea level rise. Another 79 percent of

green sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean all nest on a single Costa Rican beach that is equally vulnerable to rising seas.

Over the past three years, Turtle Island Restoration Network and nearly 160,000 advocates like you helped stop an effort to strip away Endangered Species Act Protections from Hawai'iian green sea turtles.

Now, federal wildlife policy-makers are proposing to list eight distinct population segments of green sea turtles as 'threatened' and three as 'endangered' which could result in better protections.

continued on page 2

Leatherback Sea Turtle Visits Bay Area

ONE OF THE FIRST CONFIRMED sightings of an endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle this season occurred on Saturday, Aug. 15th near Pedro Point in Pacifica, Calif. Leatherbacks, like the one spotted, migrate across the entire Pacific Ocean, over 6,500 miles each way, to feed on jellyfish along our Pacific Coast.

Captain Roger Thomas of the *Salty Lady*, a sport fishing boat, spotted the leatherback coming up for air, and passenger Peter Winch captured the sighting with his camera.

Turtle Island won protections for these gentle giants in 2001 with the formation of the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area, which prohibits deadly drift gillnet fishing between peak turtle times along our coasts.

continued on page 7



PETER WINCH

ISSUE NO. 2, 2015



Letter from the Director

A DECADE OF WORK TO PROTECT MARINE MAMMALS COMES TO FRUITION

IT WAS MARCH 3, 2008 when we completed a formal “petition” to compel the U.S. government to enforce a provision of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) that could have far-reaching impacts for the hundreds of thousands of animals that die every year in the worldwide fleets of fishing vessels that catch seafood for the U.S. marketplace.

“Section 101” of the MMPA requires the U.S. to “*ban the importation of commercial fish or fish products that have been caught with commercial fishing technology which results in the incidental kill or incidental serious injury of marine mammals in excess of United States standards.*”

Submitting our petition was not even the first step of a long and arduous process to get the U.S. government to accept its responsibility to enforce this decades-old provision that until recently, was being completely ignored.

As early as 2002, Turtle Island and Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) filed suit against the Fisheries Service for its failure to convene a Marine Mammal Take Reduction Team (TRT) for the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery. A TRT is a group of scientists and other experts, who are required to create plans to develop strategies to reduce the injury and mortality of marine mammals from U.S. fisheries. The result of this lawsuit resulted in a 2003 settlement agreement requiring the agency to convene a TRT by June 30, 2005, to address bycatch of long-finned pilot whales, short-finned pilot whales, and common dolphins in the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery. Similarly, we also filed a successful lawsuit against the Hawaiian longline fishery to reduce

the “take” of false killer whales that resulted in another TRT to deal with this deadly fishery.

By assuring that U.S. fisheries were reducing the death of marine mammals, we were able to set a strong “bar” to require foreign fisheries to meet.

In the ensuing years, we organized the public support of scores of environmental organizations, congressional support, hundreds of scientists (including Dr. Sylvia Earle), and when all this was still not garnering action, we filed a lawsuit in 2014.

As part of a settlement of the lawsuit, in August 2015, the U.S. government finally issued proposed rules to protect the 650,000 dolphins, whales and other marine mammals that are caught annually by the international seafood industry.

Now, nearly eight years after submitting our petition (with our colleagues at the CBD), we are on the cusp of a breakthrough that may prevent the death and injury of hundreds of thousands of whales, dolphins and other marine mammals each year.

Over the next couple of years, the rules will be “phased in.” We will continue to watchdog the government to ensure compliance and enforcement. Only persistence and vigilance will result in “on-the-water” implementation and compliance, and you can be assured that Turtle Island will be on the case!

Sincerely,



TODD STEINER, Executive Director
Turtle Island Restoration Network

continued from page 1

Nearly 7,000 of our members and activists signed on to our recent petition calling for greater protections for these turtles’ historic nesting beaches and foraging grounds, and for designating all existing and historic beaches as “critical habitat” to secure the future of this beloved species.

Turtle Island presented your petitions along with our own scientific comments in September. Please give today at SeaTurtles.org/Donate to support Turtle Island’s persistent advocacy for green sea turtles.

Collaboration in the Eastern Tropical Pacific



THIS SUMMER, Turtle Island’s Executive Director Todd Steiner and Central American Director Randall Arauz traveled to Ecuador and participated in CMAR to advocate for a new, bi-national Protected Swimway between Cocos Island National Marine Park, Costa Rica and Galapagos Islands National Park, Ecuador as a model of cooperation to protect sea turtles and sharks. CMAR, the Spanish acronym for the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, is a regional initiative of governments and civil society working for the conservation of Marine Protected Areas of Ecuador, Colombia, Panama and Costa Rica. Signed into law by the Environmental ministers of the four nations in 2004, the initiative has recently has been revived under the leadership of Colombia.

VICTORY! Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles Protected from Shrimp Trawls in Louisiana



ON JULY 1, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal signed House Bill 668 into law. Turtle Island welcomes this new law, which will allow Louisiana law enforcement officers to inspect shrimp boats for Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). These devices are placed on shrimp trawls and let sea turtles escape drowning by swimming out of the net through a turtle-sized hatch, as required by the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Back in 1987, Louisiana had passed a law preventing the enforcement of these turtle-saving devices.

Thanks to thousands of members and activists, and the work of our environmental allies, this out-of-date law is no

longer on the books. Turtle Island worked to convince the state's leaders that a change must be made, while the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program "red listed" shrimp to alert consumers that shrimp caught in Louisiana state waters was contributing to endangered sea turtle drownings. Due to this pressure, and over 6,000 petitions from Turtle Island members like you, H.B. 668 introduced by Representative Dorothy Hill passed both the Louisiana House and Senate and was signed into law by Governor Jindal.

In more good news for the Gulf's sea turtles, the recent five-year review completed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service recommends stepping up TED compliance in both U.S., and Mexican shrimp fisheries, and we will be working to ensure this happens! Thanks to the support of Turtle Island members like you, more sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico will be able to escape trawl nets and come up for air.

Responsible Pier Initiative

EACH YEAR, more than 250,000 sea turtles are accidentally captured, injured or killed by U.S. fishermen. Often fishermen will accidentally hook a turtle, then cut the fishing line quickly leaving the hook intact, because they fear legal trouble if they report that they hooked a turtle.

To reduce the staggering number of these incidents on piers and encourage responsible behavior, Turtle Island partnered with Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center to adopt the Center's "Responsible Pier Initiative," which promotes healthy pier environments for sea turtles and other marine life along the upper Texas coast by working directly with fishermen and fishing piers. It also gives first-responders on

piers the necessary resources to respond effectively to injuries and strandings on or around fishing piers.

In June, Turtle Island helped piers in Galveston, Texas implement the Initiative. We are educating the fishing community, and with the help of dozens of volunteers, installing signs and collecting monofilament line to reduce entanglements. We hope to expand our Responsible Pier Initiative model in Galveston to the entire Gulf Coast.



Saving Mexico's Loggerhead Sea Turtles

MEXICO'S FISHERIES are killing too many endangered loggerhead sea turtles. Thanks to your support Turtle Island and our allies won a major victory when the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that Mexico must strengthen its fishing regulations to protect sea turtles or face a potential U.S. embargo of seafood imports.

This announcement comes after we provided evidence that Mexico was in violation of U.S. law for its sea turtle bycatch under the Moratorium Protection Act. Under the act, Mexican fishermen must fish under comparable rules as U.S. fishermen.

In the U.S. fishermen follow sea turtle bycatch prevention measures. But despite Mexico adopting new rules, scientists estimate that Mexican halibut and shark fisheries off Baja California Sur have killed *more than 2,000* endangered North Pacific Ocean loggerheads each year. Thus, NMFS found that rules were not "comparable."

Now, Turtle Island will push the White House to authorize an embargo on seafood products from Mexican fisheries in order to safeguard sea turtles in Mexico.

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Photography For A Change

TURTLE ISLAND Restoration Network is proud to announce that we are teaming up with Photography for a Change, photographyforachange.com, to offer you high quality, fine art prints from top, emerging photographers. For a limited time you can purchase these stunning prints that put you in an ocean state of mind, liven up your walls and help protect our world's oceans and marine wildlife!

That's right, Photography for a Change will donate 100 percent of the profits to Turtle Island Restoration Network. Here's what happens when you buy a beautiful print from Photography for a Change:

- You get a fine art print to enjoy
- You support a talented photographer's career
- You support Turtle Island Restoration Network



ROY KIMHI

RON WOOTEN

DANA BOVE

LIE SIE

Now, about the show! Dana Bove, friend of Turtle Island and founder of Photography for a Change, curated an incredible online show especially for you. Bove sought out talented photographers from around the globe and picked three—Ron Wooten based in the Gulf of Mexico, Roy Kimhi based in Costa Rica and Lee Sie based in

California—that showcase our oceans beauty.

Please join us online for this exciting show, share the show with your friends, and purchase a print to bring a little bit of the blue world into your home or office.

Visit photographyforachange.com.

Drones and Subs Assist Scientists at Cocos Island National Park, Costa Rica

TURTLE ISLAND'S recent high-tech expedition to Cocos Island, Costa Rica deployed small submarines, inflatable boats, and Unmanned

Aerial Vehicles (drones) to patrol for marine wildlife.

Randall Arauz, Alex Hearn, and Todd Steiner of Turtle Island directed the expedition in collaboration with Costa Rica's National System of Protected Areas and the Cocos Island Marine Conservation Area, and with the companies Alucia Productions II, Precision Integrated and Aeroval, and with support from the Dalio Ocean Initiative.

Researchers used inflatable boats to tag sharks, and subs to put listening stations on an undersea mount where the stations can track migrations of 'tagged' marine wildlife. Drones searched for wildlife and illegal fishers from the sky.



Sea Turtle T-Shirt



These 100% organic cotton t-shirts are made in the U.S.. Black with white tribal turtle design.

Available in Men's & Women's sizes: S, M, L & XL (women's sizes run small).

\$25 (please add \$3 for shipping):

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or send a check to:
Turtle Island, PO Box 370
Forest Knolls, CA 94933



Crowdsourcing with Satellite Images to Find Illegal Fishing Boats

TURTLE ISLAND Restoration Network is proud to announce a new pilot program to find illegal fishing vessels within the Marine Protected Area surrounding Cocos Island, Costa Rica. Turtle Island teamed up with Digital Globe's crowdsourcing platform, Tomnod.com, to create one of the first crowdsourced, digital patrols of the marine hot-spot using satellite imagery.



A view of Cocos Island, Costa Rica from DigitalGlobe's satellites

Cocos Island is an important stop-over for large marine wildlife, like hammerhead sharks, on their oceanic migrations. The island is also home to green and hawksbill sea turtles. Jacques-Yves Cousteau dived at the island and called it “*the most beautiful island in the world.*”

Yet, sadly this blue gem is under attack by illegal longline fishing vessels that enter into the marine protected zone that extends around the Island, in search of tuna and sharks. Longline fishing is a deadly type of fishing that consists of setting a main line with

hundreds or thousands of baited hooks and then indiscriminately catching, harming or killing whatever bites the baited hooks. Air-breathing endangered sea turtles that get caught will often drown as they are unable to come up for air, while sharks that must swim to force water in their gills also perish when caught.

Turtle Island and Tomnod teamed up to share satellite images of Cocos Island with the world and find illegal fishing boats. Large satellite images were uploaded on Tomnod.com and overlaid with a grid, more than 10,000 users from around the world and Turtle Island members digitally patrolled for illegal vessels online. The campaign had the highest participation rate of any Tomnod campaign to date.

American Airlines, DHL and UPS Announce They Will No Longer Ship Shark Fins

IN EARLY APRIL, American Airlines announced via Twitter that they will no longer ship shark fins on any of their flights, including US Airways flights.

The announcement comes after Turtle Island and our Costa Rican sister organization PRETOMA found evidence that American Airlines planes were exporting scalloped hammerhead shark fins from Costa Rica on planes destined for Hong Kong by way of stops on U.S. soil. This is illegal under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

With this evidence in hand, Turtle Island began negotiations with American Airlines to convince the carrier to ban

shark fin shipments on their planes.

Using evidence gathered by Turtle Island and PRETOMA that showed DHL and UPS also had involvement in the shark fin trade, partner organizations, involved citizens and our members put pressure on ground carriers to re-evaluate their shipping policies. Now, both DHL and UPS have changed their policies and no longer fly shark fins.

Unfortunately, FedEx and other airlines have refused to change course and still fly fins.

Though banned in many parts of the world, global trade of shark is still valued at over \$1 billion and an estimated 73



An estimated 73 million sharks are killed annually, mainly for their fins

million sharks are killed annually, mainly for their fins. Please join us and take action at seaturtles.org/nofinsonboard.



Shop at the Sea Turtle Store

Silver "I Love Sea Turtles" Charm Bracelet

"I Love Sea Turtles" silver adjustable charm bracelet with sea turtle charms and glass beads. Price: \$34.00 (includes shipping)

Order online on our secure server at SeaTurtles.org/Shop.

Call us at 1-800-859-7283 to place your order.

Send a check to:
Turtle Island, PO Box 370
Forest Knolls CA 94933.



Donor Spotlight: 7th Grader Jacob Cohen Raises Funds for Turtle Island

ONE OF OUR YOUNGEST members, Jacob Cohen, successfully raised over \$1,000 to support Turtle Island's ocean and marine wildlife conservation as part of his 7th grade Tzedakah project focused around the Jewish value of righteous giving at the Ronald C. Wornick Jewish Day School in Foster City, California.

Jacob selected Turtle Island because of our dedication to action. *"Not only is Turtle Island trying to solve problems ourselves, but they are also trying to inspire other people to help,"* he said.

Thank you, Jacob for your generosity to marine animals! We welcome creative ideas for support from our members—let us know at info@seaturtles.org.



Leave a Legacy for the Sea Turtles

THROUGH A BEQUEST to Turtle Island Restoration Network in your will and other estate plans, you can leave a legacy for sea turtles, sharks, salmon and the oceans.

Visit SeaTurtles.org/BequestGift or contact us at info@SeaTurtles.org or 1-800-859-7283 for information on including a bequest to Turtle Island in your will, adding a simple codicil to your existing will, and other ways to give through your estate. Any information discussed is confidential.

A professional financial advisor may be able to help you identify additional ways to provide you with tax benefits, as well as help protect the earth's oceans and wildlife. Thank you for considering this important way to give.

Donate your Vehicle to Turtle Island

SUPPORT SEA TURTLE and ocean conservation by donating your vehicle to Turtle Island, no matter where you are in the U.S. Your contribution may be tax deductible. By donating your car, truck or boat, you will be making a vital contribution to Turtle Island Restoration Network, which receives 70-80% of the net proceeds, depending on the sale value of the vehicle.

The process is simple. Just contact Donate For Charity at www.donateforcharity.com or call 866.392.4483 and they will arrange to pick up your vehicle. They accept most cars, trucks, vans, fleet vehicles, trailers, boats and RVs that are 15 years or newer from any location in all 50 states.

Turtle Island Honors Gulf Director Carole Allen



TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK is proud to honor Carole Allen, our Gulf Office Director and board member. Since the 1980s, Carole has turned her passion for sea turtles into effective campaigns to save the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles of the Gulf of Mexico.

"In the 1980s, I founded an all-volunteer group called *Help Endangered Animals—Ridley Turtles (HEART)* that let school-children help pay for turtle food for sea turtles in the Texas 'turtle house.' The federal government was raising hatchlings to regenerate the species from near-extinction, but the funding for this project was in jeopardy so, I knew I had to take action," says Carole. "Later, the fight to save these turtles from being killed in shrimp nets took over my life."

In 2002, after working together on a successful effort to gain a shrimping closure along Texas nesting beaches, HEART merged with Turtle Island. Carole has been an invited Congressional speaker, her work has been featured in Edward Humes book, "*Eco Barons*" and *Oprah Magazine*, and she has received numerous awards. Today, Turtle Island honors Carole for her tireless work for protections that have saved thousands of sea turtles each year. Carole, congratulations and thank you!

Leatherback Sea Turtle Visits Bay Area *continued from page 1*

This designation has drastically reduced the number of leatherback deaths in the fishery. The sighting of this leatherback helps demonstrate the need for continued and increased protections. Turtle Island helped draw attention to this amazing species by getting our State Assemblymember to introduce legislation that made the leatherback the official marine reptile of California, celebrated on Oct. 15th as Pacific Leatherback Conservation Day.



Meet the Interns

TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK is proud to help train the next generation of environmentalists through our internship program. Get to know our interns:

WILL JONES, Media and Communications Intern—B.A., Philosophy, B.A., Environmental Sustainability, Miami University

AIMEE POLEKOFF, Education and Outreach Intern—B.A. Geoscience, Franklin & Marshall College

YANI POHL, Fundraising and Habitat Restoration Intern—B.S. Ecology and Evolutionary Science, UC Santa Cruz

MICHAEL RHODES, Smolt Monitoring Intern—B.S. Environmental Studies, University of Pittsburgh



Left to Right: Michael Rhodes, Yani Pohl, and Aimee Polekoff. Not Pictured: Will Jones.

Learn more about our internship program and please share with folks looking for opportunities to help us save the oceans at SeaTurtles.org/Intern.

Join Turtle Island's Monthly Giving Program

HELP US TAKE SWIFT, sustained and innovative action by participating in our Monthly Giving Program. By making a monthly recurring donation to Turtle Island Restoration Network you can make a huge impact with a small monthly donation! Choose a species or program to support, or let us use your tax-deductible contribution where it is needed most.

Donate just \$5 a month or more and we will thank you with a Turtle Island baseball cap made from 100% organic cotton.

You can cancel or change the amount of your donation anytime. Use the enclosed envelope to join, or go online to SeaTurtles.org/Monthly.

Turtle Island Restoration Network
 P.O. Box 370
 Forest Knolls, CA 94933



About the Sea Turtle Restoration Project

A Conservation Initiative of Turtle Island Restoration Network

THE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT was founded more than 25 years ago, and is a conservation initiative of Turtle Island, a leading advocate for the world's oceans and marine wildlife.

Our work is based on science, fueled by people who care, and effective at catalyzing long-lasting positive change that protects the likes of green sea turtles and steelhead trout.

Our mission is to mobilize people in local communities around the world to protect marine wildlife and the oceans and inland watersheds that sustain them.

We accomplish our mission through grassroots empowerment, consumer action, strategic litigation hands-on restoration, environmental education, and by promoting sustainable local, national and international marine policies. Learn more at SeaTurtles.org.

in this issue:

- Save Green Sea Turtles**
- Using Technology to Locate Illegal Fishing Boats**
- Shutting Down Shark Finning**
- Rescuing Texas Turtles on Piers**

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